

DELEGATED DECISION REPORT

SMD/2025/0315
Valid 14/07/2025

BANK TOP HOUSE
GREENWAY BANK
BIDDULPH

ERECTION OF HOME OFFICE
(RETENTION)

(FULL - HOUSEHOLDER)

MAIN ISSUES

- Whether the proposal comprises an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt
- Design
- Amenity
- Highway Safety

DESCRIPTION OF SITE

The proposed site comprises a brick, render and tile dwelling and its associated curtilage, situated in the Brown Edge and Endon Ward. The site is on greenbelt land, where development is more restricted. Gardeners Cottage, Greenway Bank lie to the North of the proposed site. Open Green Belt land separates the site from the neighbours at Foxley, Greenway Bank to the East. The Brown Edge 40 public right of way is located South of the site, separated from the site by the Greenway Bank highway.

PROPOSAL

The development comprises the erection of a home office outbuilding in the rear curtilage of the dwelling, with works having commenced in June 2025. The outbuilding would have a pitched roof, with a ridge height of 3.30 metres and an eaves height of 2.25 metres. The outbuilding would have a depth of approximately 4.15 metres and would have a width of 8.66 metres. A gable feature would be incorporated into the centre of the front elevation of the outbuilding. The outbuilding would be constructed from Northcot Reclamation Cherwell Heritage Blend Wirecut Facing brick, Staffordshire blue tiles and Residence 9 cream windows with astragal bars in top section with green stone cills underneath.

RELEVANT LOCAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICIES

Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (Adopted 2020)

SS1 Development Principles

1a Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

SS2 Settlement Hierarchy

SS9 Smaller Villages Area Strategy
SS10 Other Rural Areas Strategy
DC1 Design Considerations
T1 Development and Sustainable Transport

National Planning Policy Framework

Paragraph(s) 1 – 14
Section(s) 4 – Decision making, 12 – Achieving well designed places, 13 –
Protecting Green Belt land

Staffordshire Moorlands Design Guide SPD

Part 5 – Alterations, Extensions and Conversions

Staffordshire Moorlands Space About Dwellings SPD

SITE HISTORY / RELEVANT PREVIOUS APPLICATIONS

SMD/1980/1347 – Change of use to sale of antiques from garage. Refused.

CONSULTATIONS

Publicity

Site Notice expiry date: 05/08/2025
Neighbour consultation period ends: 04/08/2025
Press Advert: N/A

Public Comments

No public comments have been received.

Town / Parish Comments

No comments have been received from Biddulph Town Council.

OFFICER COMMENTS

Principle of Development / Green Belt

Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes a 'presumption in favour of sustainable development'. For decision takers this means (c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay; or (d) where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are more important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless: i) the application of policies in the Framework that

protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or ii) Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Paragraph 8 of the NPPF identifies three dimensions to sustainable development as being economic, social and environmental.

In accordance with Policies SS1 and SS2 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan the Council expects all new development to make a positive contribution towards the sustainability of communities and to protect and where possible enhance the environment. A more limited focus on future growth is to be directed to rural areas such as the rural area of Biddulph, only allowing for development of an appropriate nature. When considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The application site is located in the Open Countryside and Green Belt whereby Policy SS10 of the Local Plan (2020) is applicable. Policy SS10 states that these rural areas will provide only for development that has an essential need to be located in the countryside, supports the rural diversification and sustainability of the rural areas, promotes sustainable tourism or enhances the countryside.

Part (3) of policy SS10 seeks to protect the quality and character of the area and requires all development proposals to respect and respond sensitively to the distinctive qualities of the surrounding landscape.

The site is located within the Green Belt. Part (6) of Policy SS10 states that the Council will “maintain the Green Belt within Staffordshire Moorlands. Strict control will continue to be exercised over inappropriate development within the Green Belt allowing only for exceptions as defined by Government policy.”

The development the erection of a home office outbuilding in the curtilage of the host dwellinghouse. Paragraph 154 of the NPPF (2024) outlines that the construction of new buildings should be regarded as inappropriate in the Green Belt unless it meets an exception. Paragraph 153 of the NPPF (2024) states that ‘inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances’.

The outbuilding is considered to be a reasonable sized outbuilding for the property. Due to the size of the property and its’ substantial curtilage plot, it would be acceptable to erect a modest sized single storey outbuilding. Notably, the outbuilding is very close to being permitted development, under Class E of the GPDO. The outbuilding is approximately 0.8 metres more in height than the permitted development allowance, being a modest difference from what would be permitted development. This would not be considered a significant enough to cause harm to the openness of the greenbelt (more than what could be built under permitted development), thus it is clear that a permitted fallback position can be relied upon and is a realistic proposition, given that works have already commenced on site.

It is now necessary to identify whether there is any other harm arising from the development.

Design

Policy DC1 seeks to ensure that all development is well designed and of a high quality, contributing to local distinctiveness and harmonising with sense of place. The Council's Design SPD outlines the Council's expectations in respect of design and states that outbuildings should harmonise with the parent building. An outbuilding should respect the dominance of the original building and be subordinate to it in terms of its size and massing. It is important that outbuildings are designed and built in sympathy with the property which they serve. Ideally, materials and the roof pitch of the outbuilding would match those of the parent building.

The simple silhouette of the building with a simple pitched roof complements the host dwellinghouse, thus it is considered appropriate in this aspect of its design. The maximum and eaves heights of the summer house would clearly be lower than the parent dwelling, indicating that it would be subordinate to the parent dwellinghouse in this sense.

I note that although the outbuilding would be of a substantial footprint, any size footprint of an outbuilding is permissible under Class E of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 as amended. This is provided that the total area of ground covered by buildings (other than the original dwellinghouse) would not exceed 50% of the total area of the curtilage. Therefore, the outbuilding would not compete with the proportions of the host dwelling, as it is clearly read as an outbuilding for the ancillary use of the host dwelling. Thus, it would be considered appropriate development in accordance with the Council's Design SPD.

Materials used in the construction of the outbuilding would match those used in the construction of the existing dwelling, as well as from surrounding dwellings in the area. Although the surrounding street scene comprises a variety of house types, a prominent feature of the street scene is the brick and render used in the construction of the dwellinghouses. Northcot Reclamation Cherwell Heritage Blend Wirecut Facing brick, Staffordshire blue tiles and Residence 9 cream windows with astragal bars in top section with green stone cills underneath would be used in the construction of the outbuilding. Therefore, the materials would harmonise the materials used in the construction of the host dwelling and surrounding streetscape, not detracting from the character of the street.

The proposal, by virtue of its size, scale and siting maintains the character of the existing dwelling and wider area. The proposal would therefore accord with the provisions of local plan policy DC1 and section 12 of the NPPF in this regard.

Amenity

Paragraph 135 f) of the NPPF seeks to secure a high standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants. Local Plan Policy DC1 requires development to achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjacent development and to not cause unacceptable effects by reason of visual intrusion, overlooking, shadowing, overbearing effect, noise, light pollution or other adverse impacts on local character and amenity.

The application site is surrounded by Gardeners Cottage, Greenway Bank to the North and Foxley, Greenway Bank to the East. Thus, it becomes important to assess whether the amenity of these neighbours would be compromised.

The approximately 38.40 metre distance between the outbuilding and Gardeners Cottage and the 33.00 metre distance between the outbuilding and the neighbours at Foxley would ensure that there is no adverse impact on overshadowing / light amenity impact on these neighbours. Additionally, the mature soft landscaping comprising the boundary treatment at the site would further ensure that there is no overshadowing impact caused by the outbuilding.

There would be no windows on the North facing side elevation of the outbuilding which would face the neighbours at Gardeners Cottage, therefore no privacy amenity impact would occur for them. Although there would be three windows on the East facing rear elevation of the garden office outbuilding, they would be located approximately 33.00 metres from the neighbours at Foxley. This amount of distance would be over the 22 metre guideline set out in the Staffordshire Moorlands Space About Dwellings SPD. Therefore, no adverse privacy impact would occur upon any of the neighbours.

Highway Safety

Paragraph 109 of the NPPF states that patterns of movement, streets, parking and other transport considerations are integral to the design of schemes and contribute to making high quality places. Policy T1 seeks to provide safe and sustainable access and ensure that development does not lead to an increase in on street parking.

The outbuilding would not increase the number of bedrooms of the dwelling. Therefore, it is clear that no additional parking spaces will be required for the number of people inhabiting the dwellinghouse. Additionally, the spaces for off street parking on the driveway to the front of the dwelling would not be compromised, in compliance with Policy T1.

Thus, the outbuilding would have no impact on highway safety, in accordance with Policy T1.

CONCLUSION / PLANNING BALANCE

In consideration of all of the above, the application is recommended for approval.

Due to the application having no adverse effect upon neighbour or street scene amenity and no overall impact on the highway, it is deemed acceptable under planning policy. As the office outbuilding is very close to being permitted development, there is no doubt that a permitted development fallback position could be relied upon in this instance, regardless of its impact on the Green Belt. Therefore, the development is recommended for approval, subject to compliance with all conditions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATION: APPROVE

Case Officer: Hannah Varley

Recommendation Date: 02/09/2025

X 

Signed by: Jane Colley Signature

On behalf of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council